

I Inherited His Hands

I inherited his hands.
They grew before
They fit his gloves.

I wear his shoes and walk
In the places he paved.
My feet know the way.

Father, we both know
You wrote these words.
I only copy them here.

The Birthplace

Lost and out of gas
in the middle of a place they could not name,
they were caught in the rain
too far from the car to return in time.
They found a cave and waited
the storm out. They kept warm.
Later they returned and settled the spot.
Just here, off this road,
is the place that I was born.

Hard Sell

At first, I'd tap the door
And smile, but that's as far
As I got before the door
Was slammed against my face
And I was screened off
At my nose and noise.

I turned to flattery
And got inside the door
At least. There the women
Would smile and hesitate
Before they'd say, Sorry,
We haven't any need.

Next I learned to lie
About the product
And make jokes and laugh
At myself and play
The lech and score in bed.
But I was getting poor.

At last I learned.
I became an expert
In the art of insult,
Downright rude, even

Obscene. I called them
Whore, slut, cunt, more.

That made them buy.
I didn't have to sell,
They stole from me.
I worked the whole town.
They'd wait for me,
And everyone let me in.

-- William Virgil Davis

Bristol, CT

The Plantsitters

Friends and strangers bring them
their run-down philodendrons,
their lonesome geraniums,
vases of jaded pussywillows.

John talks kindly to the plants,
plays them records of birdsong,
cricketchirp, sounds of dusk
and dawn, and the sea.
Susan soothes them with recorder
music, knowing that Bach has been
proven a tonic for house plants,
acid rock the deaths of them.

Are the plants benefitting?
Yes, but they can't hold a bloom
to the look of well-being budding
on the faces, in the eyes
of the sitters.

The Excuse

Unlike the shy lower animals,
Our retiring, hard-to-know neighbor comes
Briefly out of his house and shell
When trouble knocks.

The night a rampaging, souped-up car
Leaped our hedge, sheared off a pine
And plastered it, crashing, into his oak
He was there. When I was solicitous
About the mangled bark, he spoke
Comfortingly, "Oaks can take
A lot." Later, he broke
Off a crushed twig of the evergreen
Murmuring, "M-m-m, it smells good."